

THE ASYLUM

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Autumn, 1990

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NBS news & notes

In the absence of our club's officers, an informal meeting was held at the ANA convention in Seattle. It was taken charge of by Myron Xenos. He explained that his partner and our president, Ken Lowe, was unable to attend because of his teaching responsibilities. Our scheduled speaker, John Pittman, gave an interesting account of his experiences with books, libraries, and bookmen. The man confessed to having libraries in three locations; perhaps that means that he buys three copies of every book? It is hoped that a complete report of John's talk will be available for our winter number.

All members are urged to attend the next scheduled regional meeting of our society, which will be held during this year's convention of the Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists. The show will be held October 5, 6, and 7 at the David L. Lawrence convention center in Pittsburgh, the site of last year's ANA convention. The NBS meeting will be held Saturday, 6 October, with NBS president, Ken Lowe, as the speaker.

Editorial

It has become a tradition to hold a meeting of our society at the convention the American Numismatic Association holds each year. This year the ANA met in Seattle (August 21-26). Although one would have thought that the relative proximity should have been an inducement to our California members, attendance at the meeting was negligible. Society officers and directors were conspicuous by their absence. It is understandable that financial or business concerns or contractual obligations prevented some of them from attending; it is a reflection on our society if not one of them was there.

With this issue we begin the publication of one of Jeff Rock's bibliographies of numismatic books. He calls this one "Numismatic literature for pioneer and territorial gold and United States silver and gold issues prior to 1837" but an attentive reader will find that the author has included several books which

have little to do with his announced subject. The earlier bibliography he mentions will be found in volume 6, numbers 1 and 2, of our journal.

Jeff points out that for the many collectors with an interest in the many thousands of pieces not fitting into this category, there are a few sources of information worth consulting. The first is *Numismatic literature*, a publication of the American Numismatic Society, now issued twice yearly, with over 120 numbers printed. This valuable work describes publications covering the gamut of numismatics. Another valuable source is Elvira Clain-Stefanelli's *Numismatic bibliography*, which is described in detail in the listing below. By far the largest bibliography of numismatic works, it even includes sections on auction catalogs. The third and possibly the most profitable source is bibliographical sections of reference works. Walter Breen's *Encyclopedia* and some of the other books listed below have large bibliographies and list many titles that have never appeared in book auctions.

Pompeji, ein Führer durch die Ruine

The increase in book collecting in the 1890's fostered the proliferation of private presses and limited editions. In a sense the earliest presses were private presses. Although Jenson's fifteenth century press in Venice was a successful commercial operation, the Academy of Aldus Manutius produced Greek texts because Aldus wanted to produce Greek texts. In eighteenth century England, Baskerville wanted to produce books which were well printed; his productions were mostly Latin classical authors because copyright monopolies prevented him from reprinting English classics. He was able to secure the right to reprint Milton's *Paradise lost*, but that was about the only English book he published.

These printer-publishers usually printed as many copies of a book as they expected to sell; at the great annual book fairs in Germany printers or their agents met and traded stock, so copies of Plantin's books were for sale in Rome and Martin Luther's tracts were available in Amsterdam. The idea of artificially limiting an edition of a book to justify charging a higher price for it and to make it more attractive to collectors does not seem to have become common until relatively recent times.

Playing on the instinct of many people to believe anything they read, unscrupulous publishers have touted as limited editions issues of as many as 20,000 copies. Numbering of volumes was refined. One series would be numbered in roman numerals, another in arabic. The curious may consult the issues of Paul Masson's books about Napoleon. Some copies were sold in sheets, some in an elaborate binding, a more elaborate binding, or a most elaborate binding with double sets of illustrations.

The recent production by a well-known bookseller, all copies of which bore the legend "Copy #1", should be a lesson to all bibliomaniacs. A few years ago Mme Tatiana Warscher told me of her publishing experience. She self-published a little guide to Pompei. Knowing of the ways of printers, she ordered the sheets for her book from one firm, then secretly had them delivered to another firm to be bound. She had two hundred copies; as time went on and her stock grew smaller she raised the price, finally selling her last copy. After some time the printer died; his widow contacted Mme Warscher and wanted to know why she hadn't accepted her books, which were taking up space in the warehouse! The printer had followed his usual custom of printing twice as many copies as contracted for, had even found where the books had been cased and had had her covers duplicated. Unfortunately for his widow, his records showed that Mme Warscher had paid for her copies but not that she had received them. *Pompeji* was back in print.



Additions and errors

by Johns Adams

WITH *United States numismatic literature*, volume II, now going to press it is an appropriate time to revisit volume I. If I had the book to write over again I would certainly include more of the mavericks from Attinelli. From the standpoint of content there are some absolute gems in that group, and although we do not always know who did the cataloging, these contributions deserve recognition. That listing will have to wait until another day. For the present it may be found useful if I list discoveries made since the publication of volume I in 1982, but first some errors:

1. *Haseltine*. I remain uncomfortable with the first seven sales and the missing eighth. Hopefully one of you will feel inspired to set this series right. Different solutions have occurred to me, as they must have to others.
2. *The Chapmans*. Number 6 is an error; the sale of that date was actually conducted by Thomas. Likewise, 17 is an error repeated from an earlier source which had misdescribed 48. Finally, 25 from the S.H. Chapman series does not come with plates. The source of my error is lost in time.
3. *Lyman Low*. My 4 is in fact the second part of 3; the real 4 is described below. Pagination continues from 2 through both parts of 3 and through 4.

There are a number of additions:

1. *Woodward*. Beside his A, B, and C sales Woodward had one to which he occasionally referred as his sale D; this catalog, dated 1/23/1897 and containing 1235 lots, is in the standard Woodward format. The items were consigned by Woodward's long-time friend Joel Munsell and are mostly books, but the patient searcher will discover a few coins and some rare catalogs. Collectors who border on the fanatic may wish to add Harlan E. Woodward's sale of 11/6-7/1886. The work, in standard Woodward format, consists of 1302 lots of stamps. Harlan may be William's philatelic nom de plume or maybe the nom of his brother. Good trivia question.
2. *Strobridge*. The E.Mck. Holley sale dated 5/15/1873 is not mentioned by

Attinelli as being part of the series. Why he chose to omit it is a bit of a mystery, because based on other contemporary sources and a close comparison of styles it is unmistakably the work of Strobridge. For the record, the new 12A contains 1036 lots, only a few of which are coins. The sole copy to come to my attention contained one photographic plate.

3. *Haseltine*. He also produced a sale dated 6/23/1885, containing 474 lots of fossils etc., consigned by J.L. Kirkpatrick. Because he did not number the sale, Haseltine probably did not consider it part of his series, a view the rest of us should be content to adopt.

4. *Frossard*. Thanks to a recent discovery there are now two sales numbered 103. The unlisted one is dated 11/29/1890. The rarity of the piece is undoubtedly accounted for by the fact that it contains 237 forgettable lots of Chinese and Japanese antiquities.

5. *S.H. Chapman*. The Siediecki sale comes in an octavo version as well as in the more common quarto.

6. *Henry Chapman*. Newly discovered 19A is a four page self-covered affair dated 1/18/1913. The sale's 53 lots were consigned by Emil Cauffman, quite possibly the same man who contributed to Cogan 26 some forty two years earlier. Just why Henry Chapman should sponsor in the flower of his career such an insignificant auction is not clear. Once he determined to proceed he would have been more readily forgiven by future bibliophiles if he had printed enough copies to go around.

7. *Steigerwalt*. There have been a number of Steigerwalt's fixed price lists unearthed in recent years. This territory is relinquished to some fellow collector who has a keener interest in the subject than do I.

8. *Lyman Low*. Number 4, referred to above, is a catalog of books and medals dated March 1884. A total of 128 lots are listed; the pagination is 83 through 90.

The R.E. Kingsford catalog (November 1885) described in a footnote on page 127 was known at the time only from the reference cited. Several years later I came across a fine copy boasting Lyman Low's traditional blue cover and containing an announcement that the sale had been cancelled because Mr

Kingsford decided to remain a collector. Despite high praise from Mr Low the material rates only a B-. It was sold in 1889 for the grand sum of \$625. A second copy of the catalog has since been discovered.

On balance it would seem that time has produced more new challenges to collectors than answers to old ones. Part of the fun of writing books like volume I, and now volume II, is to provide a foundation upon which new knowledge can be layered. May the structure grow and grow.

George Frederick Kolbe announces that production of Adams' volume two has been delayed and that the book will not be finished until mid-October or thereabouts. The problem has been the desire to have volume two match volume one, which was published eight years ago. It has taken Howard Paper Mills three months to specially manufacture and deliver paper identical to that which they supplied for the first volume. George says that printing will begin momentarily, by which I presume he means momentarily. We trust that the printer will not have trouble with the narcs.

The editor.

CLASSIFIED

Wanted: Directories of American banks, pre-1940; periodicals intended for bankers, pre-1960. Ask for want list. W.K. Raymond, 660 E. Carmen Ave, Fresno, CA 93728 (8.4)

Numismatic book list. Books on coins, tokens, banking. New, used, scarce. R. Stockley, Box 64, Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada H9H 4K8 (9.2)

Florida wanted, especially before March 1845: bonds, books, checks, documents, obsolete paper money, stocks, medals and tokens. Gresham, Box 580, Pomona Park, FL 32181 (8.4)

Books about U.S. silver and gold coins prior to 1837 and pioneer and territorial gold

by Jeff Rock

THE following bibliography on pioneer and territorial gold coins and early United States silver and gold issues is a combination of two bibliographies, being published by *The Brasher Bulletin* and *The John Reich Journal*. The format is that of an bibliography I wrote several years ago for the Early American Coppers Club which was published in their journal, *Penny-Wise*, and which was later printed, with additions, in *The asylum*.

As usual with this type of work, it was far more difficult to decide which books to omit rather than to find those which would be of use to the researcher or of interest to the collector. Because of the incredible number of books, monographs, auction catalogs and articles in newspapers, magazines, club journals and privately printed publications, this bibliography had to be limited, and it contains only printed books and monographs, including offprints and single-volume reprints of magazine articles.

The listings in this bibliography include a brief description of the contents of the work and an opinion (strictly mine!) of the usefulness or desirability of the work, information on later editions or reprints, and, finally, a rough idea of what the particular book sells for (based primarily on auction records and private sales). When a single author has written a number of books they are listed in order of publication date.

That this bibliography contains errors and omissions of relevant material I do not doubt. If there are any comments, corrections, or questions I can be reached at Box 3447, San Diego, CA 92103.



Adams, Edgar H. *Official premium list of United States private and territorial gold coins*. New York, 1909. 72 pp., line cuts by Walter Blythe.

Although this work was long touted as just a price guide, there is a wealth of additional information, especially in the area of private and territorial gold, which was one of Adams' specialties. Highly recommended.

In the past decade a small hoard of the softcover edition was found, enabling collectors to obtain what was once a very scarce book for about \$20. A very small number of interleaved copies was issued in maroon hard covers. These generally sell for more than \$100. The reprint issued in 1977 by Willett brings about \$10.

_____. *Private gold coinage of California.*

- I. *The state assay office of California, 1850.*
- II. *The Moffat & Co. issues, San Francisco 1849-1853.*
- III. *Various California private mints, 1849-1855.*
- IV. *Pattern and experimental pieces of California, 1849-1853.*

New York: American Numismatic Society, 1911-12. 110 pp., 11 plates.

A few copies of this four-part article, which appeared in *The American Journal of Numismatics*, were off printed. This first thorough look at pioneer gold, including pattern issues, was long the standard reference for the series. Complete sets of the offprints are scarce and have realized over \$200 at auction. In 1913 Adams made some minor corrections and revisions and offered the work as a single volume, in maroon cloth. Now titled *Private gold coinage of California, 1849-55, its history and its issues*, it contains a twenty page introduction by Adams. It is quite scarce and has brought \$150-200. Later editions have an expanded 28 page introduction and have sold as high as \$150. A 110 page reprint issued in 1975 by Stackpole Numismatic Books, Harrisburg, but without the introductions, sells for around \$20.

Adams, Edgar H. and William H. Woodin. *United States pattern, trial and experimental pieces.* New York: American Numismatic Society, 1913. 196 pp., ill.

The first book devoted exclusively to patterns, this text is basically a listing of the patterns in the collection of Woodin (who a few years earlier had turned over to the government the two fifty dollar gold patterns, Judd 1546 and 1548, and, as partial compensation, received two trunks full of patterns). Three hundred copies were printed; they can be found for around \$100. A small number of interleaved copies autographed by both authors were issued. One of these has brought \$300. There was a special issue of fifty interleaved copies in full brown morocco; the only known sale of one of these was at the \$1500 level. The reprints issued by James Kelly, Dayton, in 1940 and 1959, usually sell for \$25 and \$15 respectively.

Adams, Eugene H., *et al.* *The Pioneer Western Bank-- first of Denver, 1860-1980.* Denver, 1984. 219 pp., ill.

A thorough look at this historic bank from its days as Clark, Gruber & Co., issuer of many private gold coins and patterns, down to the present day. Well written, with the first published reproductions of many photographs. Still available for about \$25.

Adams, John W. *United States numismatic literature, Volume 1: 19th century auction catalogues.* Mission Viejo: George Frederick Kolbe Publications, 1982. 271 pp., ill.

A survey of early coin dealers and the auctions they conducted. Each auction is assigned grades according to the contents of various collecting fields. The biographies and sketches of some of the famous names of the past make very interesting reading. Although it may seem expensive at \$85, I highly recommend it to all collectors interested in the early history of our hobby. The edition was limited to five hundred copies.

Akers, David W. *United States gold coins: an analysis of auction records*. Englewood: Paramount Publications, v.d. A six volume series.

Vol. I. Gold dollars 1849-1889. 1975. 110 pp., ill.

Vol. II. Quarter eagles, 1796-1929. 1975. 248 pp., ill.

Vol. III. Three dollar gold pieces 1854-1889 and four dollar gold pieces 1879-1880. 1976. 92 pp., ill.

Vol. IV. Half eagles, 1795-1929. 1979. 393 pp., ill.

Vol. V. Eagles, 1795-1933. 1980. 322 pp., ill.

Vol. VI. Double eagles, 1849-1933. 1982. 404 pp., ill.

The set is the most comprehensive listing and analysis of auction records of the series covered and is a must for collectors of U.S. gold coins. Complete sets have become quite scarce and can realize as much as \$300. Individual volumes are available for from \$10 to \$40, though some searching will be required for the scarcer volumes.

_____. *United States gold patterns: a photographic study of the gold patterns struck at the United States mint from 1836-1907*. Englewood: Paramount Publications, 1975. 115 pp., halftone and color ill.

A detailed look at the fifty one patterns known to have been struck in gold, commencing with the first issue in 1836, Judd 67. A beautifully produced book, with valuable tips on rarity and appearances of known specimens, now out of print and difficult to find for less than \$35.

American Numismatic Association. *Selections from "The Numismatist": United States Coins*. Racine, 1960. 301 pp., ill.

Part of a four-volume set, this book reprints articles from 1909-1959 issues of the journal of the ANA. A few of the articles deal with early U.S. silver; all are interesting to read. Well worth the \$10 or so the book costs.

American Numismatic Society. *Catalogue of the collection of gold coins in the cabinet of the American Numismatic Society*. New York, 1909. 19 pp.

A brief listing of the gold coins in the collection of the society with no great details. The catalog was produced to show what the ANS lacked in the area of gold coins, and members were implored to fill the gaps or to contribute funds for purchasing the missing specimens. Although not of much use to the researcher the book is quite scarce, as is most early ANS material. It usually sells for around \$35.

_____. *Exhibition of United States and colonial coins*. New York, 1914. 134 pp., 39 superb plates.

One of the finest numismatic exhibitions ever held, with pieces loaned from some of the most prominent collections of the time. Included were four 1804 dollars, a Brasher doubloon, several unique colonials, patterns and territorial pieces. An absolutely indispensable guide for tracing pedigrees, the owner of each coin being identified. A very high quality publication, currently selling for \$125-150, well below its value as a research tool.

_____. *America's silver coinage, 1794-1891*. New York, 1987. 210 pp., ill.

This book contains the papers read at the third Coinage of the Americas conference, held in 1987 at the ANS museum in New York City: "New varieties of early half dimes" by David Davis; "Early dimes, 1796-1837" by Allen Lovejoy and William Subjack; "The third die: a different look" by Russell Logan; "Edge and die sequences on early half dollars" by Donald Gunnet and Ivan Leaman; "The dollars of 1794-1803" by Robert Stark; "An update on *The fantastic 1804 dollar*" by Eric Newman and Ken Bressett; "Unheralded hub changes in the Gobrecht series" by John McCloskey; "Early seated liberty quarters" by Roy Ash; "Seated liberty half dollars" by Randall Wiley and William Burgert; "date logotypes on seated liberty dollars" by David Cohen; and "The coinage and 'the crime' of 1873" by Harry X. Boosel. Still available from the ANS at \$15 and a must-have for every collector serious about the early silver coinages of our nation.

Andrist, Ralph. *The California gold rush*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1961. Ill.

One of the few books I have not seen or owned, this has been described as an overview of the gold rush days, with few areas covered in detail. Pioneer gold coins and ingots are mentioned, but nothing new is presented for the numismatist. Copies should be available for \$15 or so.

Attinelli, Emanuel Joseph. *Numisgraphics, or a list of catalogues in which occur coins or medals which have been sold by auction in the United States, also a list of catalogues or price lists of coins issued by dealers, also a list of various publications of more or less interest to numisgraphics which have been published in the United States*.

Although eagerly sought by collectors of numismatic literature this work is quite valuable to researchers in almost any area of numismatics, since it provides the names of consignors to the sales as well as an abundance of obscure information not found elsewhere. Fewer than fifty copies were printed, and fewer than half that number survive. Although the price of this book is high, it is not commensurate with its rarity, being only around \$1500. In 1976 Quarterman Publications reprinted it under the much shorter title *A bibliography of American numismatic auction catalogues 1828-1875*. This features a forward and rarity guide by noted collector John W. Adams. Now out of print, it generally sells for \$30.

Barfield, Rodney, and Keith Strawn. *The Bechtlers and their coinage: North Carolina mint masters of pioneer gold*. Raleigh: North Carolina Museum of

History, 1980. 65 pp., ill.

A thorough look at the lives of the members of the Bechtler family and their accomplishments both numismatic and non-numismatic. A catalog of the Bechtler coinage is presented, illustrated with specimens owned by the museum, with diagnostics of genuine pieces. Hardcoverd copies are selling for \$25-30; softcoverd for about \$15.

Beistle, M[artin] L[uther]. *A register of half dollar varieties and sub-varieties, being a description of each die variety used in the coinage of United States half dollars as far as the issues are known, covering the United States mint at Philadelphia and branches at New Orleans, San Francisco, Carson City and Denver*. Shippensburg, 1929. 261 pp., frontispiece of Beistle and Proskey, 7 plates.

This was long the standard reference for the series; some old-time collections still contain half dollars attributed to Beistle. Unfortunately the book is quite difficult to use for attributing coins. The original book sells for \$50-75. One hundred thirty five copies in full morocco contain photographic plates rather than the halftones of the regular issue; these have sold for about \$350. The 1964 reprint from Bebee's, Omaha, sells for around \$25.

Betton, James L., ed. *Money talks: a numismatic anthology selected from Calcoin News*. California State Numismatic Association, 1972. 372 pp, ill.

An anthology of articles which appeared in *Calcoin News*, the journal of the CSNA during the past 35 years. Although no earth-shattering articles are presented the book does make enjoyable light reading. Still available for under \$10.

Birdsall, C.M. *The United States branch mint at Dahlonega, Georgia: its history and coinage*. Easley, 1984. 119pp, ill. Six color plates.

A well written work giving good background history of the Dahlonega mint as well as a thorough listing of its coinage. Available for around \$25.

_____. *The United States branch mint at Charlotte, North Carolina: its history and coinage*. Easley, 1985. 123 pp., ill. Color plates.

A companion to the above work examines in detail the operations of the Charlotte mint, from the legislation surrounding its opening to its eventual closing. An important book, available for about \$25.

Bolender, M[ilford] H[enry]. *The United States early silver dollars from 1794 to 1803*. Freeport, 1950. 75 pp., 9 gravure plates.

The standard reference to the series. Bolender, who put together one of the finest collections of early dollars ever formed, was a dealer as well as an astute collector. He issued many fine auction catalogs, including one for the sale of his own collection. The plates in the original are

superior to those in any of the reprints. This classic numismatic work belongs in the collection of every serious numismatist. It sells for about \$75, occasionally being found with an errata sheet correcting a few text errors and one plate error. The undated reprint issued ca 1969 by Bebee's, Omaha, contains halftone plates and generally sells for \$35-40. Bebee's 1974 revised reprint generally fetches \$30. Krause Publications' 1982 reprint of the last sells for \$25-30. Krause's 1987 reprint, 96 pp. and including an updated list of rarities, is still in print and costs \$25. Guides to valuations have been issued in 1950, 1956, 1961, 1971, and 1974, probably also in other years. These scarce guides usually sell for \$2-5 when offered along with the Bolender book.

Bowers, Q. David. *Adventures with rare coins*. Los Angeles, 1979. 305 pp., fine-screen halftones.

A fascinating book, great for background reading as well as to capture a feeling for what numismatics was like in the past. The anecdotes and a nostalgic foreword written by dealer-collector-numismatist extraordinaire John J. Ford, Jr, make the book a bargain at \$15-20.

_____. *The history of United States coinage as illustrated by the Garrett collection*. Los Angeles, 1979. 572 pp., ill. (some colored).

What can be added to the praises lavished on this book? By far the finest general reference book yet produced in this country. The Garrett collection provided an incomparable opportunity to produce such a book, and the number of wonder coins depicted in its pages can still make the adrenalin flow. Costing about \$40, this high quality book should be included in any numismatic library. I strongly suggest that any beginning collector first acquire this book and Walter Breen's Encyclopedia.

_____. *United States gold coins: an illustrated history*. Los Angeles: Bowers and Ruddy Galleries, 1982. 415 pp., ill., 24 color plates.

Bowers and Ruddy made numismatic history in 1982 when they sold the incomparable collection of United States gold coins that belonged to the late Louis Eliasberg (although they were required to bill it as "The United States gold coin collection"). This book is filled with fascinating information and illustrates some of the choicest pieces from that incomparable collection. Another must-have book, by one of the most prolific, most readable authors numismatics has ever known. Still available from Bowers and Merena Galleries at under \$30.

_____. *Virgil Brand: the man and his era*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1983. 248 pp., ill.

The story of Virgil Brand, perhaps the greatest coin collector who ever lived, is presented here in great detail, including an abundance of material never before published. Brand, who prior to the publication of this book had a reputation of having been nothing more than a hoarder of rare coins, is revealed as a serious and knowledgeable numismatist. The book makes fascinating reading and is impossible to put down (I had to read it twice to make sure I hadn't missed anything the first time around!). Still in print at under \$30.

_____. *Abe Kosoff: dean of numismatics*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena

Galleries, 1985. 351 pp., ill.

As usual, Bowers delivers a thoroughly readable, completely enjoyable book. Kosoff, who started in 1929 as a small-time dealer, ended up as one of the most successful dealers of all time, handling virtually every rarity in the U.S. series, with special emphasis on private and territorial gold and U.S. patterns. The edition of 500 copies is still in print at about \$20.

_____. *The compleat collector*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1985. 40 pp., half of them cartoons by Elli Ford.

A whimsical, often tongue-in-cheek look at the hobby. A great tonic for those of us who often get carried away with coins. At about \$5 this is must reading.

_____. *United States dimes, quarters, and half dollars: an action guide for the collector and investor*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1986. 215 pp., ill.

A look at the dime, twenty-cent, quarter and half dollar denominations, including tips on sleepers and varieties. Written in Bowers' easy-to-read style, it is informative and interesting, even to the advanced numismatist. In print, about \$10.

_____. *The numismatist's bedside companion*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1988. 224 pp.

A collection of twenty nine articles originally appearing in the firm's Rare coin review. Interesting reading, sure to be perused time and time again. In print, under \$10.

_____. *Buyer's guide to United States gold coins*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1989. 122 pp., ill.

Aimed mainly at the investor in gold coins, this book provides combined mintage figures for the various types and lists in charts the number of auction appearances of specific dates and/or mintmarks. In print, about \$20.

_____. *The numismatist's fireside companion*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1989. 224 pp.

A companion volume to the above book, this reprints twenty six articles, including one by the famous collector Louis Eliasberg on the formation of his incomparable collection. In print, under \$10.

_____. *United States coins by design types: an action guide for the collector and investor*. Wolfeboro: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1989. 255 pp., ill.

A brief look at each U.S. coin design from 1793 to the present. Each design is illustrated and provided with mintage information. Although this book seems aimed at the investor, the included historical information justifies its inclusion in every collector's library. In print, under \$10.

Breen, Walter. *Walter Breen's encyclopedia of U.S. and colonial proof coins 1722-1977*. Albertson: F.C.I. Press, 1977. 324 pp., ill.

The standard reference on proof coins, this book presents abundant historical data and hitherto unpublished information on proof production. The halftones of some of the most gorgeous coins imaginable are uniformly of high quality. Pieces which are known to have been in famous collections are listed as well as those seen by the author during his more than thirty years' research. Although many copies of this book were produced it has become a modern rarity. Don't expect to find a copy for less than \$100. The 1990 reprint by Bowers and Merena has paper covers. It has appended a fourteen page list of corrections and additions (some merely correcting typos, others with important information). The quality of the halftones is poor but the \$30 price is better. As noted numismatic literature dealer stated in a recent auction catalog, "Dave, if you're reading this, buy the boards, restart the press, the reprint is worthy of better treatment."

_____. *A complete course in numismatics*. n.p.: United States Numismatic Association, n.d. 70 pp.

Gives valuable tips on the grading of U.S. coins as well as surface, strike color, and other characteristics by variety. Very little in the way of historical information but a very useful supplement to the ANA grading guide, Photograde, and the multitude of other grading guides floating around. Quite scarce and missing in several larger libraries but, because of its relative obscurity, in little demand. When it has been offered, the price has been around \$35.

_____. *Dies and coinage*. Hewitt's Numismatic Information Series, n.d. 36 pp., ill.

A well researched and succinctly written monograph, the first devoted solely to die making and the minting process. A treasure trove of information and a booklet that should be in every numismatist's library. Required reading and, at a price of around \$5, easy to obtain.

_____. Seven pamphlets detailing the varieties of U.S. gold coins:

Major varieties of U.S. gold dollars. 24 pp., ill.

Varieties of United States quarter eagles. 32 pp., ill.

Major varieties of the United States three dollar gold pieces. 19 pp., ill.

Early United States half eagles, 1795-1838. 72 pp., ill.

Varieties of United States half eagles, 1838-1929. 45 pp., ill.

United States eagles. 59 pp., ill.

New varieties of \$1, \$2.50 and \$5.00 United States gold. 16 pp.

Chicago: Hewitt Numismatic Publications, ca 1964-6.

These monographs were originally serialized in the *Numismatic Scrapbook* and were later reprinted as separate monographs. Although the quality of the halftones is generally poor, the quality of the research and writing is high and more than compensates for the illustrations' shortcomings. By far the best volume is that on early half eagles. The set of seven pamphlets is

becoming scarce, although with some searching it can be found for around \$30. Individual issues range from \$1 to \$7. Highly recommended, as are most of Breen's works.

_____. *Proof coins struck by the United States mint*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1953. 48 pp.

Originally issued as Vol. 20, nos 2 and 3, of *The coin collector's journal*, this is Breen's first work on proof coinage, drawn largely from his extensive research in the National Archives. Although for the most part incorporated into Breen's *Encyclopedia*, listed below, it is still of interest to collectors and is available for \$5 to \$10.

_____. *The United States patterns of 1792; dime, half dime and cents*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1954. 16 pp., ill.

Originally published as whole number 154 of *The coin collector's journal*. It is of special interest that this is the first time the engraver of the 1793 half cents was identified as the man who also engraved the obverse die of the 1792 pattern dime. Required reading for anyone interested in the history of the early coinage of the United States. Available for around \$10.

_____. *The United States minor coinages, 1793-1916*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1954. 16 pp., two halftone plates.

Originally published as Vol. 21, No. 3 of *The coin collector's journal*. Although it deals only with half and large cents, two and three cent pieces, and nickel five cent coins, there is abundant information about early engravers and mint practices which should be of interest to every collector. Still available for around \$5,

_____. *The secret history of the Gobrecht coinages, 1836-1840*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1954. 28 pp., ill.

Originally published as Vol. 21, Nos 5 and 6, of *The coin collector's journal*, this well written monograph deals with the history of the pattern and regular issues attributed to Christian Gobrecht, including several 1835 and 1836 patterns and proposed designs. A wealth of material, some of it never before published. Easily obtained and quite inexpensive at under \$5.

_____. *Silver coinages of the Philadelphia mint, 1794-1916*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1958. 28 pp.

Originally issued as whole number 159 of *The coin collector's journal*. In this monograph Breen examines the silver coinages of our first mint. The information he presents is, as usual, of the highest quality, much of it hitherto unpublished. Available for around \$5.

_____. *United States half dimes: a supplement*. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1958. 16 pp.

Originally published as the final issue, whole number 160, of *The coin collector's journal*. A valuable monograph giving rarity ratings, notes on more varieties, and some pedigrees. Obtainable for about \$5 and highly recommended, this supplement was also published as part of the Quarterman reprint of the Daniel Valentine work on half dimes described in detail later. Ω

German states bibliography

A short practical guide for pre-1760 coins

by Alfred Szego

A COMPENDIUM of the most valuable reference works, drawn from my experience, may help guide collectors of old minor German coins. Most of the items listed will not just fall into your hands. If your bookseller cannot help locate items for you, try the numismatic book auctions.

1. Collection Bonhoff, vols I and II. Frankfurt: Busso Peus Nachf. Auction Catalogs 293 and 295, Oct. 1977 and June 1978. The sale covers approximately 1000 to 1400 AD. Vol I, by far the more important, contains 2158 lots; vol II, 322. The illustrations in the text show 95% of the coins. Vol I is a must!

2. *Die saurmasche Münzsammlung deutscher schweizerischer und polnischer Gepräge*. Berlin, 1892. Two vols. About 1350-1619 AD. Lists and illustrates 3171 coins. One vol. reprint, Schloss Burgpreppach (1968). Most important.

3. *Collection Wilhelm Kraaz*. Halle: A. Riechmann & Co, Feb. 1924. 40 plates. Containing 1150 lots, 95% illustrated, this sale covers the Kipper period (ca. 1619-29), a time of empire-wide coin debasement not included in #2.

4. Gerhardt Schön. *Deutscher Münzcatalog 18te Jahrhundert*. Munich: Battenberg, 1984. 864 pp, ill. Covers ca. 1700-1806. A good start in a difficult area. There is an excellent bibliography after each country or state covered. Relatively easily available. Another must!

5. Günter Schön. *Altdeutschland*. Munich: Battenberg, 1976. 729 pp., ill. A catalog of Holy Roman Empire issues from 768 to 1806. Covers German coins preceding #4, many from the very difficult 1630-1700 period. Relatively easily available, this is another must.

6. Günter Schön. *Katalog der Kupfermünzen des römische-deutschen Reiches im 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Graz: Verlag für Sammler, 1978. 233 pp., ill. Useful to attribute still other German copper coins. Moderately available.
7. O.P. Ecklund. *Copper coins of German states since 1500*. n.p., 1963. 126 pp., ill. Useful offprint from *The numismatist*, but poor illustrations.
8. *Coins of the world; copper, nickel & brass*. F.W. Scott, 1913. Useful for minors. Reprinted.
9. *Deutsche Brakteaten: Collection [Arthur] Löbbecke*. Halle: A. Riechmann & Co., 1925. 43 plates. Contains 1032 lots, 95% illustrated. Revised edition by E. Mertens. Münster:Dombrowski, 1974. 68 pp., 43 plates. Standard for bracteates. Moderately available.
10. Peter Berghaus. *Der Münzschaftzfund von Hermer-Westig*. Hemer: Bürgerverein, 1949. 96 pp., 16 plates. Excellent for the attribution of the small concave, uniface Schüsselpfennige. Moderately available.
11. Ottfried Neubecker and Wilhelm Rentzman. *Wappen Bilder Lexicon*. Munich: Battenberg, 1974. 415 pp., ill. An update of Rentzman's classic on heraldry, illustrating thousands of coats of arms. Moderately available.
12. F.W. Schlickeysen and R. Pallmann. *Erklärung der Abkürzungen auf Münzen*. Berlin & Stuttgart, 1896. viii+511 pp.+two charts of monograms. Good for mintmasters' letters and legends. Reprinted (1961).
13. Otto Flamig. *Monogram auf Münzen, Medaillen, Marken, Zeichen und Urkunden*. Braunschweig, 1968. Ca. 182 pp., 60 of them plates of monograms. Moderately available.
14. William D. Craig. *Germanic coinages*. Mountain view, 1954. 242 pp. including three plates of line drawings. This book is very well known and will

be *the* guide for English-speaking collectors. A veritable gold mine of information, covering the period from Charlemagne through Wilhelm II. Not illustrated, but a 16 page supplement has three pages of line cuts. Usually available at auctions. To paraphrase an ubiquitous TV commercial, don't start out without it.

A closing note is in order. Germanic states were incredibly fragmented during the period described. The farther back we go, the more coin issuers. The literature is vast, and hundreds of books, costing perhaps more than \$200,000, would be required to cover most all of the German coins. The best I can suggest is covering 90% of the coins you are likely to encounter, buying reference works which are within reach at a moderate cost. The books listed should do just that. Ω

The printer's devil

by Joel Orosz

HE placed my card face down on his desk. "What can I do for you, Mr Marlowe?"

"Tell me about the Brasher doubloon."

"Ah yes," he said. "The Brasher doubloon. In some ways the most interesting and valuable of all early American coins. As you no doubt know."

"What I don't know about early American coins you could almost crowd into the Rose Bowl."

Raymond Chandler's 1942 private eye story, *The high window*, is —as you no doubt know— one of the most famous novels to use an American coin as a central feature of the plot. Chandler's hardboiled detective, Phillip Marlowe, was admired by thousands of readers, and Humphrey Bogart brought Marlowe to life on the silver screen in an adaptation of another tale, *The big sleep*. (Film buffs with a numismatic bent will know that *The high window* too was turned into a 1947 film titled "The Brasher Doubloon". Alas, that was a B movie at best. The main device of Chandler's plot in *The high window*, the theft of the

Brasher doubloon, became a reality in 1965 when Yale University's Brasher was stolen from the Sterling Memorial Library, along with several other coins from Yale's cabinet. After the doubloon was recovered and returned to Yale the University decided to sell the coin during a period of financial tightness, in 1980. Stack's, the firm selected to handle the transaction, issued an attractive four-color booklet to promote the private-treaty sale, with the price fixed at \$650,000. Intrigued by the life-imitates-art aspect of the story, Stack's mentioned *The high window* prominently in their booklet, thus increasing the fame of the novel.

If many numismatists are aware of *The high window* as an example of coin-in-novel literature, very few recall another contribution, one by Ellery Queen. In 1947, while "The Brasher doubloon" was enjoying its brief run in movie houses across the land, Little, Brown, & Co. published *Calendar of crime*, an anthology of mystery stories by Ellery Queen. One of these was titled "The adventure of the President's half disme." (Aficionados will know that Ellery Queen is the pen name of cousins Frederic Dannay and Manfred Lee, a team which wrote the exploits of the erudite detective Ellery, beginning in 1929. If my memory is correct, one of them was a numismatist; at any rate they were aware that half dimes were issued briefly with the archaic spelling *disme*.)

I won't reveal the denouement, but the plot is briefly this: Martha Clarke, a farm girl, is in danger of losing the homestead. By chance she finds the diary of an ancestor, Simeon Clarke, which tells of the February 1791 visit of George Washington to Simeon's home. To acknowledge Simeon's hospitality the President buries his sword and a 1791 half disme somewhere on Simeon's farm. Ellery Queen then proceeds to match wits with the father of our country, with the result that— but I promised that I wouldn't tell.

Now anyone with a copy of the redbook will object that as far as we know there is no such thing as a 1791 half disme. The authors are perfectly aware of that fact and, in the story, Washington himself mentions that this 1791 is an experimental coin, struck from silver he himself provided, given him as a

keepsake. They also hint that the coin may have been struck outside the mint. It seems clear that the authors were aware of the persistent story that George Washington had presented the family silver service to be melted by the mint for conversion into half dismes. This story received confirmation a few years later when Walter Breen discovered a document signed by J.R. McClintock, a treasury official. McClintock said that Adam Eckfeldt had told him on April 19, 1844, that one hundred dollars' worth of half dismes were coined at the request of President Washington from "bullion or specie" deposited by the first president for that purpose. The by-then-retired chief coiner also remembered that the half dismes were struck in the cellar of Mr. Harper, a saw maker, because the mint was not yet ready to go into operation, so Ellery Queen realized that there is probably no 1791 half disme but teases us with the tantalizing thought of what might have been— even could have been.

Be that as it may, "The adventure of the president's half disme" provides twenty minutes or so of enjoyable reading for the collector of numismatic literature. Anyone inclined to read it may also find it, if your local library does not have the original edition, reprinted in *Ten great mysteries*, edited by Howard Haycraft and John Beechcroft (Garden City: Doubleday & Co. Inc, 1959). In fact, you would make an interesting collection by gathering novels and short stories that center on numismatics. Perhaps an enterprising NBS member could put together a bibliography of such works for anyone who may be interested. If so, it would probably be wise to omit *Moby Dick* from the list. If I recall correctly, a coin gets nailed to the mast in that one! Ω

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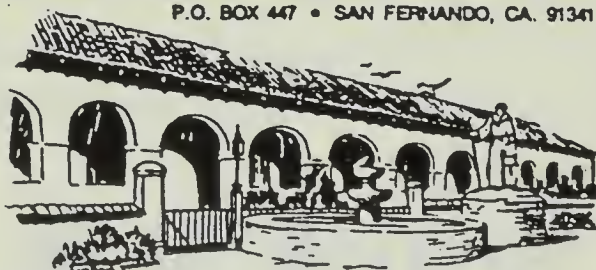
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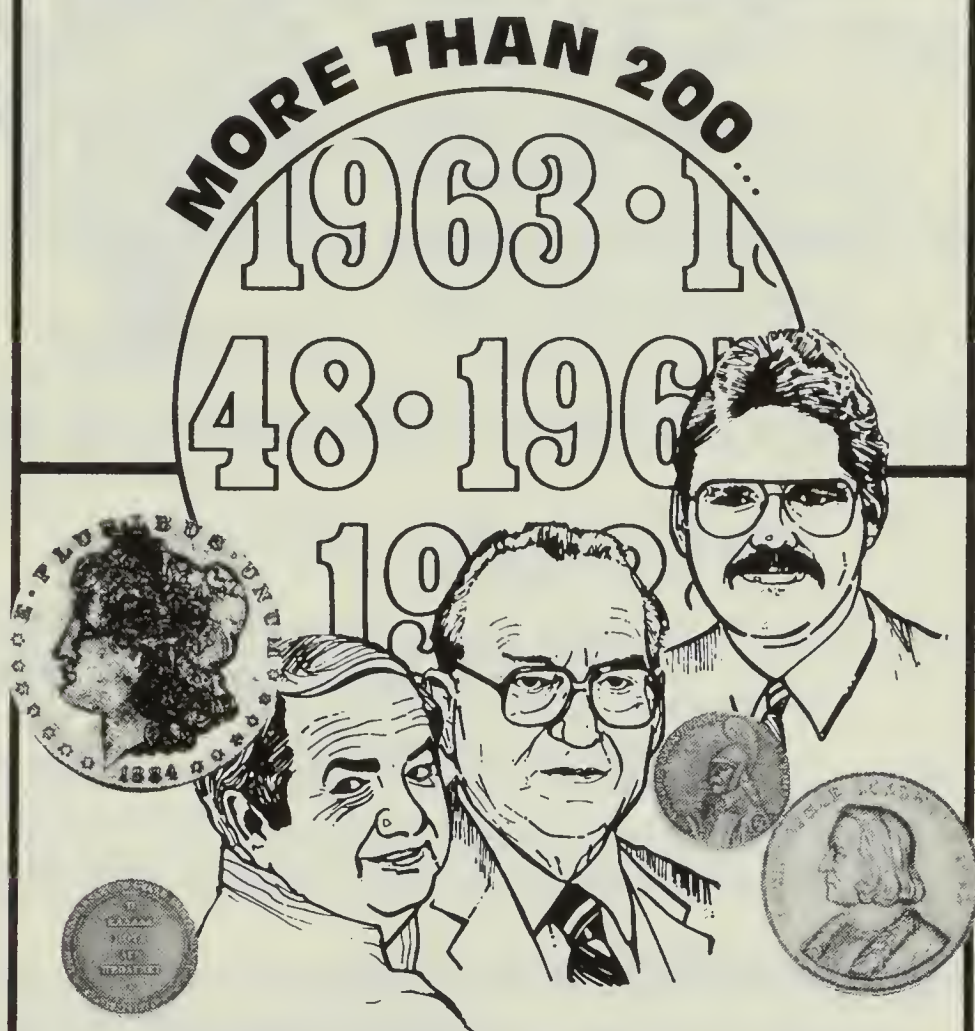
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